

Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /075 W

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R 201805Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7009

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 01840

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FT, US, FR

SUBJECT: TFAI

REF: PARIS 676

1. IN RESPONSE TO THEIR INVITATION, UNION NATIONALE POUR L'INDEPENDENCE OFFICIALS OMAR FARAH (PRESIDENT OF UNI AND TFAI DEPUTY TO FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY), MOHAMMED ELABE (UNI SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN RELATIONS AND TFAI MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS) AND CHEHEM DAOUD (TFAI MINISTER OF HEALTH) MET WITH EMBOFF JAN. 20. THE BURDEN OF THEIR MESSAGE WAS THAT AS THE TFAI MOVES TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE, THE UNI WISHES TO ESTABLISH REGULAR CONTACT WITH THE U.S. THEY SAID THEIR APPROACH HAD BEEN APPROVED BY TFAI PRESIDENT ALI AREF.

2. EMBOFF WELCOMED THE MEN'S INITIATIVE IN OPENING CONTACT. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION, IT WAS AGREED THAT THE

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MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF MAINTAINING A DIALOGUE WOULD BE

FOR AN OFFICER OF OUR EMBASSY IN ADDIS TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ELABE, FARAH OR DAOUDE (IN THAT ORDER) DURING HIS PERIODIC VISITS TO DJIBOUTI. MEETINGS WITH ALI AREF COULD EASILY BE ARRANGED ON THE SPOT.

3. THE THREE MEN GAVE A SUCCINCT, ALMOST COGENT OUTLINE OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS, BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL, THE CREATION OF A VIABLE, INDEPENDENT TFAI PRESENTS. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THEY ACCEPT THE DESIRABILITY FOR CONTINUED FRENCH SUPPORT AND SEE SOMALIA AND SOMALI-BACKED RESIDENTS OF THE TFAI AS THE GREATEST THREAT. THEY GIVE AT LEAST LIP-SERVICE TO THE NECESSITY TO ASSOCIATE ALL SHADES OF POLITICAL OPINION, BOTH AFAR AND ISSA, WITH UNI AND GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES, AND CLAIM THE NUMBER OF IRRECONCILABLES IS LESS THAN 20 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION. THEY PREDICT INDEPENDENCE IN ABOUT TWO YEARS. WITHOUT SAYING SO, THE TRIO SUGGESTED THAT COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE UNI AND ITS AMERICAN "FRIENDS" WAS NEEDED TO COUNTER SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA.

4. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF JAN. 19, QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA HAREL INDICATED THAT DURING THIS WEEK'S CONVERSATIONS IN PARIS, THE GOF WAS URGING THE TFAI DELEGATION LED BY ALI AREF TO BROADEN ITS BASE OF SUPPORT. HAREL APPEARED marginally MORE OPTIMISTIC THAN LAST MONTH ABOUT ALI AREF'S ABILITY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS. HOWEVER, HE WAS LESS SANGUINE THAN EARLIER ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES FOR EFFECTIVE AFRICAN AND ARAB GUARANTEES AND MORE CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT IN THE FUTURE. HE DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE BASIS FOR RECENT FRENCH PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT IMMINENT DISORDERS IN DJIBOUTI.

5. COMMENT: AS IN MAYOTTE, LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN DJIBOUTI APPEAR ANXIOUS TO REMAIN LONGER UNDER THE TRICOLORED FLAG THAN PARIS ITSELF CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE. THE IDEA OF MEETINGS WITH UNI OFFICIALS IN DJIBOUTI SEEMS USEFUL TO US, BUT WE MADE NO PROMISE THAT EMBASSY ADDIS WOULD TAKE UP THE SUGGESTION.

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